

(Mrs. INCHBALD's Translation.)

THE
MIDNIGHT HOUR.

COMEDY,

IN

THREE ACTS.

From the French of M. DAMANIANI,

CALLED

GUERRE OUVERTE; ou, RUSE CONTRE RUSE.

As it is now performing

AT THE

THEATRES ROYAL

COVENT-GARDEN and SMOCK-ALLEY.

TRANSLATED

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

DUBLIN:

Printed by GEORGE PERRIN,

FOR THE COMPANY OF BOOKSELLERS.

M, DCC, LXXXVIII.

17476.64.23
DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

Marquis,	—	Mr. <i>Chalmers.</i>
General,	—	Mr. <i>O'Reilly.</i>
Sebastian,	—	Mr. <i>Paulet.</i>
Nicholas,	—	Mr. <i>Cherry.</i>
Ambrose,	—	Mr. <i>Mitchell.</i>
Mathias,	—	Mr. <i>Swords.</i>

W O M E N.

Cecily,	—	Mrs. <i>Heaphy.</i>
Julia,	—	Mrs. <i>Chalmers.</i>
Flora,	—	Mrs. <i>Cornelys.</i>

Porters,—Messrs. *Malone, Lee, Dowling, and Murray.*

☞ A farce with the title of, *The Midnight Hour*, having lately been published in London and Dublin, it is necessary to acquaint the public, that it has not the least resemblance to the piece now performing with such applause in London and Dublin; but the following is the *only* genuine copy, which may be readily ascertained by comparing it with the next representation at the Theatre-Royal, Smock-Alley.

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
 FROM
 THE BEQUEST OF
 EVERY JANSEN WENDELL
 1918

THE
MIDNIGHT HOUR.
A FARCE.
IN THREE ACTS.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A Street.*

Enter the *Marquis* and *Sebastian*.

Marquis. **T**HIS is my native place—the town that gave me birth—and in spite of my attachment to the capital, dear Madrid, I must prefer this to every other spot in the world.

Sebastian. Ay, my Lord, you came hither to take possession of the estate of a rich uncle just deceased; and it is that which renders the place so very agreeable—you wou'd, but for that circumstance, forget your gratitude for your birth; and while you remained here, lament you were ever born.

B

Marq.

Marquis. You are mistaken, Sebastian.

Sebastian. Why, my Lord, although I am nothing more than an humble domestic of your Lordship's, if I was not in love, and the object of my passion living in this very identical town, I could not be happy in it—but perpetually pining after the capital.

Marquis. Give me your hand, Sebastian—for once my equal.

Seb. How so, pray, my Lord?

Marq. By being in love—for love is a general leveller—it makes the king a slave; and inspires the slave with every joy a prince can taste.

Seb. Ay, Sir, but we are not all equals in love for all that—for instance, you will always be above my match; for I never did, nor ever could, love more than one—now your Lordship I have known to love sixteen—and all at the same time—and all so well, it was impossible to tell which you loved the best.

Marq. Do not mention any of my past affections—I never loved till now—never till I arrived at this place, and beheld—

Seb. Pray, my Lord, how many? and whereabouts do they all live?

Marq. Impertinent.

Seb. Nay, I am sure I don't care how many, provided they are neighbours—but, you know in Madrid, my Lord, you fell in love with four, that lived exactly at the different corners of the town; and I had so far to run every night and every morning with your Lordship's "ardent love," and "constant affection," that, if the death of your uncle had not brought you here to inherit his estate, I must certainly have given up my place; or petitioned your mistresses to have come all into the same neighbourhood.

Marq. O these passions were different to that which now possesses me—for now I love only one—and she is—

Seb.

S. b. What?

Marq. An angel.

Seb. Then give her up — for I am sure she is too good for—

Marq. She is a divinity, I swear.—

Seb. But is she maid, wife, or widow?

Marq. A maid.

Seb. Hold—hold—don't swear to that.

Marq. And yonder [*shewing the General's house*] is the place of her abode—do not repine at her habitation—You see you will not have far to go, for the house is directly opposite to my hotel.

Seb. Repine—it makes my heart rejoice—why, my Lord, in that very house lives my sweet-heart—and I make no doubt but she attends upon yours.

Marq. If so, it is the luckiest accident in the world—she can perhaps obtain me an interview with her mistress—for as yet I have only beheld her in the public walks—or from her window—fly to the woman you mention instantly, and desire her to inform you of every particular concerning her lady—for at present, I do not know any thing about her.

Seb. Why, now I begin to think you are really in love—for that is the first and great fundamental cause of a man's real love for a woman.

Marq. What?

Seb. Because he does not know any thing about her.

Marq. Pshaw!—I do know, that her name is Julia ---and that she lives in yon house with her uncle, General Don Guzman—who served in the last war. ---In my youth while I was on a visit at my uncle's, I have seen the General frequently, for he and my uncle were upon the warmest terms of friendship---nay, but yesterday he called at my hotel to enquire for me, but I chanced to be from home; and this morning I mean to return his visit—but then I have no hope of beholding his niece—he is cautious to

whom he introduces her; and to visit him, will but perhaps render my access to her more difficult still.

Seb. I believe you are right, Sir---for I have, now I think of it, a letter in my pocket that will put an end to all your hopes at once.

Marq. What do you tell me?---quick, let me see it---from whom is it?

Seb. From my sweetheart---Mrs. Flora.

Marq. Read it this moment.

Seb. [Reading] "My dear Sebastian,"---"my dear, dear Sebastian,"---"my dear life,"---

Marq. Go on, Sir---go on---read the whole letter.

Seb. [Reading] "I no longer live with the old countess, and the reason is, because she is dead."

Marq. S'death, leave out every thing but Julia.

Seb. Oh yes, very true---where is she [Looking in the letter] I can't find her.---

Marq. [Snatching the letter] give it me.

Seb. I beg as a favour, my Lord, you will not read about the tedious minutes---and long nights.

Marq. [Reading.] "I now live in the General's house, and attend upon his niece the madam Julia, who is going to be married instantly."---

Confusion---"her intended husband is a rich merchant, who is expected from India every hour---he is the choice of her uncle; for she has never yet seen him."---From that circumstance a dawn of hope breaks in upon me---Fly, Sebastian, to your acquaintance immediately---tell her she must aid me to break off this marriage---fly,

Seb. No---pray, Sir, first read the conclusion of the letter.

Marq. What more about Julia? [looking eagerly.

Seb. No---but a great deal more about me.

Marq. Ptha!---be gone---which way are you going? Yonder is the house she lives at.

Seb. Yes, but not the house where she dare admit her lover---we meet at the house of a friend of mine, where we can make free.

Marq.

Marq. Very well.--and be sure to tell this womanⁿ who writesto you with such affection, that if she can procure me the hand of her beloved mistress, I will immediately recompense her with *thine*--and fortune into the bargain.

Seb. Dear my Lord, a fortune!--How can you mention any other reward, after having mentioned me! [Exit.]

Marq. I have but very little hope from this experiment either--'Sdeath, my fortune and my rank are superior to this detested merchant's.--The General, her uncle, was ever friendly to our family--What if I avowed my love to him? By heaven here he is.

[The General enters from his house.,

Gen. Who have we here?

Marq. General Don Guzman--

[Bowing.]

Gen. My dear Marquis, is it you? Yes, I see it is --and though twelve years since I saw you, yet, if I had not heard of your arrival, I should not have passed you without remembering you perfectly.

Marq. You did me the honour to call on me yesterday--and I beg a thousand pardons that I should so long neglect--

Gen. Oh, no ceremony, Marquis--I called on you when it was convenient--and do you call on me when it suits you.--Never stand upon any ceremony; I hate it.--Your uncle and I were friends for thirty years, and never asked one another "how we did" in our lives--I hate all ceremony.--While you stay in this part of the world, receive the same hearty welcome and friendship from me your uncle ever did--but on the same score---no ceremony.

Marq. *[Aside]* By heaven, this warm reception makes me hope for every thing.

Gen. You seem thoughtful, young gentleman!

Marq. *[Aside]* My situation is desperate, and such must be my attempt.

Gen. Quite melancholy, Marquis--your uncle's death I suppose?--

Marq. True, General, that does weigh heavy--- and yet I have something which weighs upon my heart still more--time presses me to disclose what it is---I am in love---desperately---madly in love---and it is with your niece---but I hear you are going to marry her to an Indian merchant--this damps my hopes, but, perhaps, inflames my wishes still higher, and impels me to declare, that nothing but an invincible bar shall prevent my casting myself at her feet, and pleading my cause.

Gen. Young gentleman, I desired you wou'd use no ceremony---and I think you have comply'd with my desire to its full extent.

Marq. Did not you bid me make free?

Gen. I did---and now I shall take the same liberty myself---You are the most forward, confident, presumptuous man---and if my niece was even disengaged, you shou'd not have her.

Marq. Is this my reward for behaving as you requested I wou'd?---Why then, if she was disengag'd, I wou'd have her---and so I will now---Don't be offended---I cannot think of making a stranger of a man who was upon such intimate terms of friendship with my uncle.

Gen. I'll suffer death if your assurance does not make me laugh---and if my word was not given to marry my niece to another, you shou'd have her---just to show people I like they should make free.

Marq. Your word pass'd, General!--what can that signify when your niece has never seen her intended husband, and perhaps, when she does see him, may have the utmost aversion to him?

Gen. And pray, my Lord, are you sure she likes you?

Marq. No, I am not sure,--I know not yet if even she observed me, although I have followed her incessantly.--But, dear General, bring me to her, and let my tongue declare the thousand agitations which my eyes have, I fear, but too faintly explained.

Gen.

Gen. My Lord, my promise is given to Don Carlos---and can I under such an engagement, think of introducing you to her?

Marq. Oh General! consider the violence of my passion---consider--- [Kneeling.]

Gen. Consider you are in the streets. [raising him.]

My Lord, attend to what I am going to say.---

Had you gained my niece's affections before you made this application, I would have listened to it; for I would not, notwithstanding my promise to Don Carlos, so entirely oppose the inclinations of my niece---but as she as yet knows nothing of you, and of course can have conceived no partiality, prudence and justice demand I should not suffer you to see her---and here I solemnly forbid you my house.

Marq. Distraction!

Gen. Nay, I only forbid you till the marriage is over---then you are welcome to come as soon as you please.---Do not make yourself uneasy---you have no long time to wait---Don Carlos will be here some time to-day, and the marriage ceremony is to be performed at midnight, at the hour of twelve exactly---it is an ancient custom in the family to marry at that hour.---Farewell---and as soon as that hour is passed you shall be welcome to come to my house and make as free as you please. [Going.]

Marq. I will make free before that hour by some stratagem.---I will win my Julia's heart, and steal her from you in spite of your security.

Gen. And by heaven if you do, you shall have her---and with my consent.

Marq. I take you at your word. [Warmly.]

Gen. Don't kneel down again.---My word is given and I won't recall it.---If you can contrive to take my niece from my house any time before twelve o'clock this night (with her own concurrence, not else) I will say you deserve her---and with my hearty consent you shall have both her, and her fortune.---Nor is my word broken with her intended bridegroom,

bridegroom, for I will take every precaution during that interim which bars, bolts, locks, or trusty servants can give.

Marq. But will you only allow me till midnight?
---that time is so short---

Gen. Oh you begin to recant, do you?---You take her away--ha, ha, ha,---and with her own consent too?

Marq. Without it, I wou'd scorn the attempt.

Gen. And, at all events, you had better give it up, for I shall be upon my guard; and invent what stratagem you will, I believe I shall discover it.---You take her away?---and within a few hours---it makes me laugh.

Marq. Provoking! [*Aside.*] Yes, love inspires me---and half my estate to half yours, I do take her away.

Gen. Done---it is a wager---no being off.

Marq. Being off! I insist it is a wager.

Gen. You are so bold, I must go back and see if my niece is safe at home now or not. [*Going.*]

Marq. Farewell, my dear uncle.

Gen. Uncle!--you impertinent.---Stay till you have taken my niece out of my house.---Uncle, indeed!

Marq. Remember me to my destined wife.

[*Exit General into his house.*]

Enter Sebastian.

Seb. My Lord, I have overheard part of your conversation with the General, and surely you have been to blame to let him know your intentions.

Marq. I was to blame to give him warning of my designs; but my passion has rendered me unable to project with cunning---but no matter---the difficulty of the enterprise will encrease the glory of the success; and what says---

Seb. My Flora!--She has promised you all her assistance; but she is afraid the other servants will
not

Not be in your interest; and there are four besides herself.

Marq. No more than four!--and what are they?
---describe them.

Seb. One is an old soldier who has been with the General in all his battles, and has but one promising quality for us; and that is, he is so lame (that although his fidelity is such we shall not be able to bribe him to let us into the house) yet, if we once get in, we can run out again without his being able to overtake us.

Marq. Good.

Seb. And the porter is a man so deaf, that although he will not be able to listen to any of our offers, we may break open the door, if his back happen to be to it, without his hearing us. But the man-servant we have most to dread is one Nicholas, the General's valet, a self-sufficient, presuming, insignificant boaster; and for ever officiously concerned for the good of his master.

Marq. Nicholas is his name? You have named them all now?

Seb. No, there is one more---the worst of them all---and a female too---old Cecily, the duenna--She (Flora tells me) is even more attached to the General than any servant he has; and she has ears, eyes, and senses for all the family that wants them.

Marq. She must be the first we win over to our cause.

Seb. Ah! my Lord, I am afraid---By heaven, here she comes---just returned from church.

Marq. Do you be gone then---for before a witness it will be impossible to offer her a bribe.

*[Exit Sebastian, and bows to Cecily as he passes;
she enters and crosses to the General's house.]*

Marq. What an ungracious countenance!--but no matter.---It is best to begin with our greatest difficulties-----

[She takes out a key and unlocks the door.]

Marq.

Marq. Donna Cecily, Donna Cecily!

[In a soft tone of voice.

Cecily. [Turning round disdainfully] Signior!

Marq. I think [with much softness.] you are one of the domestics belonging to the house?

Cecily. Domestics!--I am the governante general, and the general governante of the whole house.

Marq. Pardon me.

Cecily. I thank you for your compliment, Signior, and am your humble servant.

[Curtfying with a sneer and going.

Marq. One word---my dear Governante, one word---I have something of the highest importance to communicate to you.

Cecily. (Aside) A lover of my young lady's I suppose: I am glad of it, that I may have the pleasure of repulsing him---what would you have, Signior?

[with a voice the most forbidding.

Marq. You are severe---that air you put on, agrees but little with those gentle and beguiling looks nature allotted you.

Cecily. And do you think to cajole me by your deceitful rhapsody upon my beauty? (very loud) I am old and ugly---and, what is more, have, thank Heaven, as bad a temper as any woman in the world.

Marq. You wrong yourself I am sure.

Cecily. I tell you I don't---and if you come hither after my young lady, I have the pleasure to inform you, you won't get her---she is disposed of---her uncle has so ordained it, and I would not be the cause of her disobeying her uncle for the world---I am true to him, because he gives me the power to use every body else as ill as I please---and now I wish you a good day; having the satisfaction to leave you in utter despair.

[going.

Marq. Nay, stay---a hundred pistoles are in this purse---take them and be my friend. (holding her hand.)

Cecily. No, Signior---my master's interest, and the pleasure

pleasure of refusing a favour, are both too dear to me, to accept your bribe. [*The General comes to the threshold of his door.*]

Gen. Cecily with the Marquis? astonishing! Let me listen.

Marq. Dear, dear Cecily. [*Sees the General.*] the General listening---change the battery.

Cecily Dear Cecily?

Marq. Yes---for I am charmed to find you what you are---You have won my esteem and friendship for ever.

Gen. Indeed!

Marq. You have your lady's real happiness at heart, I find.

Cecily. And who could suppose I had not?

Marq. Pardon me---but I had heard quite a different account of you from what you deserve.

Cecily. Is it possible?

Marq. Nay, the General I am certain, believes quite different of you, from what you have proved yourself to me.

Cecily. If he does---poor deceived man!

Gen. Oh, the hussy!

Marq. Take this purse---nay, it is your due; for I had a capital bet against me, provided you had not acted as you have done,--- [*she takes the purse*] on my knees I thank you; for you have now made me the happiest of men---all my wishes must succeed---Oh, General, where are you now with your boasted confidence?

Gen. (*Coming between them*). I am here, and you have lost your bet still.

Marq. Good heaven!--my dear lady, he has overheard all our discourse. [*Affecting confusion.*]

Gen. (*In extreme anger.*) Yes, I have overheard it.

Cecily. So much the better.-----

Marq. General, forgive us both---we did not suppose you had been so near---curb your resentment---the governante has the highest regard for you and
your

your family---and I protest her fidelity is proof against all my persuasion.

Gen. Don't talk to me, Sir---don't attempt to deceive me!

Cecily. What do you mean?

[*Surprised.*]

Gen. (*To Cecily.*) Go you about your business immediately---you never set your foot into my house again---in pretty hands, truly, I had confided my niece! a pretty duenna I had chosen!

Cecily. General, what do you mean?

Gen. Never let me see your face again---take care of that---take care I don't even find you lurking about any of my premises, with a love letter under your apron---for if I do---

Cecily. And you are really displeased with me?

Gen. I am indeed---but never you mind---his Lordship thinks himself highly obliged to you ---

Marq. No, indeed, I don't, General---no, indeed, I don't.

Cecily. And do you turn me away?---turn me out of your house?

[*Half crying.*]

Gen. Yes---but never you mind---his Lordship will take you into his, I dare say.

Marq. No, I won't, General---no, indeed, I won't.

Cecily. Hear me, General.---

Gen. Not a word---no reply---be gone this instant ---and to-morrow I'll send the wages after you, you have so little merited.

Cecily. General, General, you use me ill.

Marq. You do indeed.

Cecily. You are in an error.

Marq. You are indeed, General--I protest and swear you are.

Gen. I am glad of it---'tis something new---and I'll keep in it---why don't you go about your business? [*going to her*] at your age!--a'nt you ashamed?---you ought to blush;---but for my part, I always thought it of you--I have suspected you these twenty years.

Cecily. Have you? then you shall find I will not be suspected in vain---you shall find what I *can* do. ---for when I go---your good genius forsakes you.

Gen. Why, you are hated and detested by every body---I was the only person on earth that *ever* could endure you---and now you are found out by *me*--- you have not a friend in the world. [going.

Cecily. [following him.] You have lost your senses.

Gen. You have lost your place.

[Exit into his house.

Marq. Rash and unthinking man!

Cecily. Young gentleman, he has provoked me so far, I'll serve you against my inclination. I hate you---but I think I hate him something more---therefore command me, and I will do all I can to obtain you his niece---do you want a disguise, under which to enter the house? I will procure you one; and instruct you in every turn and winding of the apartments.---My dear, Sir, I will do you all the good I can, out of *spite*. [Exeunt.

END OF FIRST ACT.

C

ACT

A C T II.

SCENE II. *A Saloon at the General's.*

Enter General; Nicholas, Ambrose, Mathias, and Flora, following.

Gen. **A**ND I lose both my wager and my niece, if he finds means to take her out of my house before midnight.

Nic. Take her out of this house while I have the honour of serving you?—the Marquis knows little of the faith and diligence of your servant Nicholas, or he would soon drop the attempt.

Amb. And knows little of your soldier Ambrose, who (*walking up to the General very lame*) on the first alarm, would fly to give him battle.

Mat. What?—what is all this—(*trying to hear*) it is a sad thing to be deaf.

Flora. And this said Marquis must know very little of your trusty servant Flora,—

Gen. No more professions---I believe you all firmly attached to my interest---and if I should win my wager, I promise each of you a purse of ten pistoles.

Amb. Oh, the wager is already won.

Nic. Yes, Sir---and you may as well pay us now.
[*Holding out his hand.*]

he Marquis *enters disguised in a riding cloak and wig, at the top of the stage.*

Marq. They are all assembled and conspiring against me---softly---in here---in here.

[*goes into a closet.*]

Mat. [*After pulling one servant, then another*] nay, but tell me---what is it?---I am sure there is something going forward.

Gen. Why don't some of you tell that poor fellow Mathias ;

Mathias; he is dying with curiosity to know what we have been saying.

Amb. I'll tell him in the hall, over a bottle.

Gen. But, egad, while we are consulting here, the door is open, and any body may rush into the house.

Nic. How came I not to think of that?---I am not surpris'd any one else did not think of it---but that I should not--

Gen. Send Mathias to guard the door immediately.

[*Nicholas makes signs to Mathias.*]

Mat. What? what do you say?---You need not speak so loud---only tell me what you mean? [*Nicholas makes signs.*]

Mat. What, the door?---yes, yes, I will, I will---[*going returns*] what is that, what all this great consultation has been about?---ay, I thought what it was.

[*Exit slowly.*]

Gen. He's a good servant, notwithstanding he never hears a word that is said to him. Ambrose, both you and he must keep guard below---you have quick ears, and he has quick legs---you must hear for him, and he must run for you---keep both of you at the great door, and do not suffer a creature to enter, unless they first give you this sentence, "*Love and honour,*" which shall be the watch, for all who have the liberty to enter.

[*Exit lame.*]

Amb. I obey, Sir.

Gen. And now, Nicholas, while I step to my niece to inform her of what has happened; do you run to the port to meet her betrothed husband,--for I hear his vessel is just arrived---I durst not leave my house---and as he and I are entirely unacquainted with each other, (except by good report) he knows nothing of my dislike to ceremony, and may take my neglect to meet him as an affront; therefore, begone immediately with my respects, and I wait impatiently for the pleasure of seeing him:---and in your way, step to my niece's mantua-maker, and desire her to come and take measure of her, for her wedding cloaths---

a little finery may take up the poor girl's attention, and prevent her reflecting too much upon the state she is about to enter, with a man she never saw.

[Exit.

Nic. Of all the servants my master has, I am the only one he trusts with the office of receiving his visitors.

Flora. And of all his servants, you are the only one he sends with a servile message to a mantua-maker.

Nic. Oh! great men will sometimes do little offices,---witness my making love to you.

Flora. And great women will not always accept little offices---witness my refusing your love.

Enter the General and Julia.

Gen. But my dear niece---What not gone yet, Nicholas?

Nic. Sir, I fly.

Gen. But, remember to give the watch-word to the mantua-maker, or they won't let her in.

Nic. The watch-word! I will, I will---but what is it---I have forgot it---Flora, what is it?

[Aside to her.

Flora. I have a great mind not to tell you.

Nic. Yes, pray do.

Flora. 'Tis "Love and honour." [Pushing him off.

The General and Julia come forward.

Gen. But what do you think of a man who has the assurance to pursue you, without first gaining your consent?

Julia. I think it is one of those injuries a woman does not always resent.

Gen. But when he refused him your hand, he vowed he would take you off by force.

Julia. Do not be alarmed, uncle---force is seldom used, but to her that is willing.

Gen. But I flatter myself you wou'd not be willing.

Julia.

Julia. Don't flatter yourself---you know you always cautioned me against yielding to ideas that flattered me.

Gen. And is it possible you wou'd consent to go off with him?

Julia. I think---it is possible.

Gen. You are certainly talking thus in jest.

Julia. Upon my word I speak seriously---a lover to undertake what the Marquis has done, must love very sincerely indeed---we are always proud of having inspired an ardent passion---too often we cannot partake of it --and the heart once gone, it is hard to say what will not follow.

Gen. But he is the most presuming young villain---

Julia. Is he young too?-- Oh, dear uncle?---

Gen. And you mean to encourage him?

Julia. You know young people should be encouraged---and Don Carlos can much better bear a rejection; for he is old, and has been used, I dare say, to the sorrows and disappointments of this wicked world.

Gen. Very well,---go on - but if the gentleman should dare to come within these walls, I'll do for him.

Julia. No, uncle, let me do for him.

The Marquis enters from the closet.

Marq. Now fortune be my friend.

(Aside.)

"Love and Honour."

[coming as from the outward door.]

Gen. Pray, Sir, who are you, that you should know these words?

Marq. I am journeyman to the manna-maker for whom you sent, and am come to measure this lady for the wedding suit.

Gen. This strange-looking man gives me some suspicion---no matter. *(Aside)* That's right, young man---take the measure instantly---for it will be

wanted early in the morning---you must make great haste to have it done.

Julia. No, pray don't, Sir.

Marq. Why not, madam, if your marriage should even be deferred, you may still wear your cloaths---and I am sure I shall think it such extreme pleasure to work for you, I shall esteem it a happiness to pass the whole night in your service.

Julia. You are very good, Sir; but I would not give you so much trouble.

Marq. Dear madam, it would be no trouble at all. *(going to her)* what a shape is here!

Gen. What are you about, Sir?

Marq. In what manner, madam, would you choose your dress to be made? a la Turk, or in the new style l'Anglaise? *(Looking at her with a sentiment of earnestness which fixes her attention)* whatever is the habit, you will still be equally charming: and adorn, rather than receive adornment from it.

Gen. Come, Sir, make haste! *[impatently,*

Marq. Please, madam, to turn a little more towards me---that's right, very well---now, hold up this hand, now drop this, now take this

[Offers her a letter.

Gen. The Marquis as I live-----hold, hold, my Lord.

Julia. The Marquis? *[Aside,* what a delightful man!

Marq. Yes, charming Julia, it is the Marquis,---he who adores you.

Gen. Go out of my house, go out of my house: *[He leads him to the door, the Marquis then breaks from him, runs and kisses Julia's hand violently, and then exit, led off by the General, who is calling all the time]* Let her alone---go about your business---*[after pushing the Marquis off.]* who's below there? who's below?---what, if I have him secur'd, and confine him here till midnight is over! a good thought, Ambrose! Ambrose! *[Calling at the door, turns and sees Julia reading*

reading the letter.] Give me that letter--*[calls again]*
Ambrose, shut the door; don't let that man out--
Give me that letter.

Enter Mathias, slowly.

Mat. Ambrose says you are calling---what wou'd you please to have?

Gen. Oh, they have let him out! what did you come for? I never wanted to give a direction in a hurry, but this fellow was sure to come to receive it.

Mat. Ambrose said, you were calling.

Gen. Get away, you deaf--get away; don't you see I am angry? *[Bawling to him.]*

Mat. Hungry?-----O, very well; I hear plain enough.

Gen. Get away, you stupid--*(drives him off.)* it is that scoundrel Nicolas who has sent the Marquis in this disguise; it was he who gave him the watch-word, I dare say; but I'll make him remember it.

Enter Nicholas.

Nic. Don Carlos will be here instantly; I've run till I'm out of breath.

Gen. Take that, Sir.

[Strikes him.]

Nic. What for my good news?

Gen. No, Sir; but for giving our watch-word to the Marquis.

Nic. It was he then that pass'd me as I came in? I thought it was; I wish I may die if I did not.

Gen. Oh, you knew it was he, did you?

Nic. Yes; I knew he must be a great man, for he gave me such a slap in the face as he came by--Oh, Sir, indeed you must have felt it, to have known how it made me jump: one mauls me in the house, and another mauls me in the streets, and all for nothing.

Gen.

Gen. How dare you say so? can you deny that you sent the Marquis into my house, under the disguise of one of the mantuamaker's journeymen?

Nic. Indeed, Sir, I did not; besides my ladies mantuamaker has only women work for her; all her journeymen are gone to England.—I dare say, Sir, before we were on our guard the Marquis slipped into the house, and *overheard* the watch-word.

Gen. Perhaps he did;—but no matter—he is turn'd out of doors—And you, [*To Julia*] you good-for-nothing, I have a great mind——

Julia. Ay do, uncle, turn me out of doors too.

Gen. As soon as you are married to Don Carlos, I will—but now my good fellows [*to the servant*] let us not be outwitted again—attend no more to watch-words, but deny admittance to every creature except Don Carlos—you say he will be here instantly?

Nic. Yes, Sir; he only waits at the inn till he has taken two large chests from on board his vessel, full of precious things for my young lady, which are so valuable, he will not suffer them to be a moment out of his sight; I heard him order four porters to be ready to bring them, and his servants hinted to me they were presents for my lady.

Gen. [*To her*] Do you hear, you ungrateful? [*To Nicolas*] you have seen Don Carlos; nobody in this house except yourself has ever seen him; therefore, do you wait at the door till he comes, that no one else may be mistaken for him. [*Exit Nicolas.*]

Julia. And must I be the wife of Don Carlos? Oh, heaven prosper the Marquis's attempts!

Gen. I am afraid your prayers are vain—however, let him try all his arts; and you may try all yours; and I will try all mine; and the first shall be to lock you into your chamber till Don Carlos arrive—Please to walk this way; no reluctance. [*Exeunt.*]

Flor. Oh, Sabastian! Sabastian! I am afraid my mistress is torn from your master for ever—and I deprived of you, for these three years to come at least.

Enter

Enter Nicholas; and Sebastian disguised as Don Carlos.

Nic. Don Carlos,

(Exit Nicholas.

Enter General.

Gen. My dear Don Carlos, welcome to Spain;

Enter four porters with two chests; they place one in the middle, the other on one side the stage.

Seb. General, I am overjoyed to see you, *(to the porters)* why did you bring the chests into these apartments?---pardon me, General, I meant they should have been left in the hall---but as they are here, permit them to remain; [*Exeunt porters*] for they contain a few trifles from India, which I mean to present to my destined bride.

Gen. Don Carlos, why such attention?

Flora. Shall I call my young lady, pray, Sir? Dear, how I long to have a peep! *(looking at the chests.*

Seb. [*Aside to her*] Hush---don't you know me?

Flora. Sebastian, as I live! [*aside.*

Seb. Did you express your curiosity to see these trifles? if you did, here's the key, Madam.

(Gives the key.

Gen. She expresses her curiosity indeed! I should not have thought of satisfying *her* curiosity! Don Carlos, walk this way, and satisfy yours, in beholding your future wife.

(Exit Gen. and Seb.

Flora. Who won'd have supposed Don Carlos shou'd be Sebastian, and I not know him till he was obliged to tell me so himself---But by what means cou'd he contrive to be introduced under that shape---O, he has bribed Nicolas I dare say.

Marq. *from the chest that is in the middle of the stage.)*

Flora,

Flora, Flora, open the lid.

Flora. Who called me?

Marq. I---the Marquis---I am stifled, suffocating!--

Flora. In this box, as I live!--Oh, excellent!--I shall die with laughing.

Marq. Open the lid.

Flora. I can't for laughing.---Hush, hush, don't be in such a hurry---don't be in such a passion---don't speak a word.---Let me see if any body is coming---no, all is safe (*opens the lid*) Come out---no---lie still, and let me look at you a moment.---Well, you are the prettiest Jack in a box I ever saw!

Marq. Help me out.---(*she helps him*) Oh, that's right---I breathe once more---Hide me somewhere instantly, for I shou'd die if I was kept in that chest another moment.

Flora. Where *can* I hide you?---we have no place where you will be safe, we are so watched---but Nicholas is in the plot I suppose?

Marq. No, no, he is not---it is the old duenna whom your master turned away this morning.---She went to Don Carlos, on board his vessel, the moment she heard he was arrived; and telling him the General was in the country, keeps him with the ship till to-morrow morning; and, in the mean time, she had my servant disguised and impoted him upon Nicolas (who came to the inn to inquire for Don Carlos) for Don Carlos himself.---Nicholas in the plot!--no, no.

Flora. I am heartily glad of it; for with all his boasting, he is the most unlucky varlet---

Marq. I flatter myself Julia is not averse to my wishes.

Flora. No, that she is not; but will run away with you the first favourable moment.---Hark! I hear somebody coming in haste up stairs---hide in this closet.

Marq. That is where I hid before?

Flora. No matter--we have no time to lose.

(*He goes into the closet, and she shuts the door.*)

Nic.

Nic. Flora, Flora---what do you think?---Hush---such a thing!

Flora. What?---What surprising thing now?

Enter Nicholas.

Nic. Speak low---(*He points to the chest from whence the Marquis came, with great significance*)---He is there.

Flora. Who? What is there?

Nic. Hush---(*in a half whisper*) The Marquis---One of the porters have just told me of it. His servant (a Mr. Sebastian) is now playing the part of my master's intended nephew; and the Marquis himself is shut up in that box---Ha, ha---ha (*laughs*)---and I am going to have it taken back again to his hotel by Mathias, whom I have ordered to come up and take it away;---and then, as soon as he returns, he and I and Ambrose mean altogether to seize this grand Impostor, Mr. Sebastian, who is now with my master, and give him a little return for what I received on the Marquis's account this morning.

Flora. A fine story you have been telling, truly; and I have had patience to hear it all!---Why that chest was full of Indian silks and muslins for my young lady;---I opened it and took them out before my master; and have hung them up in my lady's wardrobe.

Nic. Impossible---it can't be!

Flora. Why, see; the box is empty. (*opens it.*)

Nic. Flora, Flora, you are in the plot.

Flora. Simpleton! How do you suppose any man could lie in this box?

Nic. It would hold two men.

Flora. No, nor half a one.

Nic. How mistaken you are. (*gets into the chest*) There;---pray an't I in now?---and at my ease?

Flora. No---at your ease?---no,---nor entirely in. Your head is out.

Nic. There,---there then;---see there.---My head is in now I hope?

Flora

Flora. Yes, now 'tis in. I find I was mistaken. — You are in now sure enough. (*she shuts the lid and locks the chest*) I find I was mistaken.

Nic. But don't shut the lid. — Flora, Flora, open the lid.

Enter Mathias.

Mat. I am come to take the chest to the Marquis's hotel.

Flora. Here it is; make haste.

(*making signs to him.*)

Nic. Mathias! Mathias! (*calling from the chest.*)

Mat. (*pointing to the chest*) Sad doings here, Mrs. Flora; shameful doings.

Nic. Mathias! (*calling.*)

Flora. (*stooping to the chest*) You know you may as well hold your tongue, for he can't hear you.

Nic. General! General! Ambrose! (*calling.*)

(*she makes signs to Mathias.*)

Mat. You need not tell me. I know who I have got here; — Nicholas told me — (*dragging the box*) and I'll give him a hearty tumble or two as I go along.

Flora. (*very loud*) Pray do.

Mat. Ha?

Nic. Flora! General! (*calling.*)

Flora. I say, pray do.

Mat. And perhaps I may tumble him down stairs.

Flora. Do, you are very welcome. — I will help you to the top of the stairs. (*she pushes it while he draws it off; she then runs to the closet*) My lord, you find all is discovered; — the door is now open, fly away immediately.

Marq. Why go, till I have gained my point?

Flora. You must; I have a project in my head not half so hazardous as your staying. — Fly to your hotel and keep Nicholas from returning; that is more essential than any thing at present; for he pries so in-
to

to all that is going on, we can do nothing while he is one of our guards.—Away, away.

Marq. I obey; but remember how much I rely upon your zeal. [Exit.]

Flora. I will be the first to discover to the General, what in a few minutes somebody else will tell him, if I don't.—By this, I gain his entire confidence, and then—

Enter Sebastian.

Seb. Flora, your master has not the smallest suspicion of me. What have you done with my Lord?

Flora. Away, away; he is gone, and you must follow him.—All is discovered.

Seb. How?

Flora. Ask no questions, but away while you can—while the door is without a guard,--or you'll be murdered if you are caught.

Seb. But I have left my hat; let me run for that. [Going back in great haste, he runs full upon the general, who enters] No, I'll run away without it.

[Exit running.]

Gent. What is the matter with Don Carlos?—Where is he going in such a hurry? (turning to Flora, sees her in a fainting fit in an arm chair) What is the matter with you, Flora?

Flor. Oh, General, General, General, General, General, General!—I can say nothing else at present.

Gen. One runs away from me; another can pronounce nothing but my name—What can this mean?

Flora. The supposed Don Carlos is an impostor!

Gen. An impostor?

Flora. Valet to the Marquis, and Nicholas has been brib'd to introduce him. Nicholas is wholly gone over to them.

Gen. But how did you know all this?

D

Flora.

Flora. The Marquis was hid in one of the chests. I wanted to have a peep at the fine things and saw him, ---Oh, (*trembling*) I shall never recover my fright.

Gen. One of the chests is gone!

Flora. Yes---as soon as Nicholas found I knew all, he called up Mathias, and made him take away the chest in spite of my tears and cries;---for poor Mathias you know could not hear me;---and then I fainted and cou'd not come to you.

Gen. Faithful creature!--Oh, that villain, Nicholas! why he is worse than old Cicely. Poor Flora---poor thing!--take this purse as a reward for thy fidelity.

Flora. Oh, Sir, I don't deserve it;---indeed I don't, Sir.

Gen. Take it, take it; you shall have it, I punish'd old Cicely, and by the same rule I ought to reward you.

Flora. Since you desire it, Sir;---but indeed you are too good to me.

Gen. Say no more, but step to my niece, while I run and see that the door is safe; for while so many of my house have turned against me, I have every thing to fear. But you---you are a miracle of faith; and henceforth, all my confidence shall be placed in you alone.

Flora. Why, indeed, Sir, I must own few servants could have done as I have done;---and yet you think too well of me.

[*Exeunt separately.*]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

A C T. III.

S C E N E I. *Moonlight.*

A garden; or pavilions on each side the stage; a wall at the bottom of the stage, and a hedge at a little distance from it. Sebastian discovered descending from the wall by the arbour-work fastened to it.

Sebastian.

Jumping down. **H** E R E I am safe: [*calls in a whisper*] Flora, Flora---this is the very minute she appointed in her note---how can she be so slow when we have such little time left!--the clocks have now all struck eleven, and in one hour more, it will be midnight, and our doom fixed. Oh, midnight, midnight! twelve o'clock, twelve o'clock! what a great deal we have to do before twelve o'clock!--during this season of the year, she and her young lady sleep in this pavilion, [*goes to the right*] and the old General and Ambrose sleep in this,--[*goes to the left*]---in a country town such as this, every body has been in bed an hour ago; therefore, unless the family sit up to watch.---No,---here she comes---'Sdeath! and the old General with her. What shall I do? [*trying to ascend the wall, falls; then, hides behind the hedge*] here, here, here.

Enter the General, Ambrose, and Flora from the pavilion.

Flora. Dear, Sir, it is only eleven o'clock; I beg you will sit up till twelve.

D 2

Gen.

Gen. No, no, I'll sit up no longer;---my fears are as much quieted for this night as if the clock had already struck twelve.

Flora. Ay, Sir, but there is no being sure.

Gen. While there was cause for apprehension, I was as cautious as any body; but now my niece is safe in bed, and I have had the precaution to bring away her clothes, even if she had an opportunity of going away, she could not go without them;---besides her windows are grated; her door locked; and I have the key in my pocket.

Flora. But, Sir, she may still---

Gen. Why, yes, she may still go out at the chimney; for that I have not guarded against,---but if she does, Flora, I'll forgive her. No, I'll go to bed;---the Marquis shall not have to boast that he kept me up an hour after my usual time;---to-morrow it will add to my triumph to tell him, I went to bed at my usual hour.

Flora. Well then, Sir; if you won't sit up, I will;---I will sit up 'till twelve strikes, and amuse myself by playing upon my lady's guitar; and if you should chance not to sleep, you will find by my musick, I cannot sleep either, while any danger threatens you.

Gen. Good girl; good girl.

Flora. Here, Sir, is the key of this pavillion; lock me up, I beseech you, too, lest any fatal thing should happen, notwithstanding your precaution, and I be suspected.

Gen. Impossible I should suspect you; no, no, no, no.

Flora. Pray, Sir, take the key; indeed you had better lock me up; you had indeed, Sir.

(Forcing the key upon him.)

Amb. Lock her up, lock her up, Sir; I don't think it wou'd be at all amiss.

Gen. Well then, Flora, since you desire it.

(Takes the key.)

Flora.

Flora. Thank you, Sir, thank you; good night, Sir; (*curtysying*) now my conscience is safe.

(*Exit into the pavillion, the General locks the door.*)

Gen. Come, Ambrose; I now feel my mind pretty easy;---I am only sorry Don Carlos is not yet come, for his ship is certainly arrived; however, he won't come 'till the morning now, to be sure.

Amb. (*Yawning as if half asleep*) No, he won't come till morning now to be sure.

(*Exeunt to the pavillion.*)

Sebastian comes forward from behind the hedge.

Seb. Oh, what a rage I am in; and if I was not afraid the General and his crippled attendant would overhear me, I would so abuse---

(*Goes to Flora's pavillion and speaks through the key hole*)
Flora, Flora, (*calling softly*) you serpent, you viper, snake, crocodile, I hate you, abhor you; oh, you good-for-nothing; oh, that I had you here. (*Flora comes from a window in the pavillion, taking away a large iron bar, goes up to Sebastian and strikes him on the shoulder.*)

Flora. And here I am.

Seb. What do I see?

Flora. We have no time to spare or I would return your compliments.

Seb. Why, where, for heaven's sake did you come from?

Flora. From the pavillion.

Seb. Not at the door.

Flora. At the door? do you think I did? I have a genius above such common methods;---I came by the window, and had the dexterity to remove that iron bar, as large---

Seb. But have you had the dexterity to take the bar from your mistress's chamber?

Flora. No, that is fast yet; and yet she is out.

Seb. By what means?

Flora. The General, thinking he had nothing to fear if he once saw her in bed, as soon as she pulled off her cloaths, he seized them and carried them out of the room; she stepped behind one of the curtains; I dressed the pillow in her night-cap; the old man put his head forward and wished it a "good night;"--that instant she stole out of her chamber, and flew to mine;--I lighted him out of her's; he double locked the door; ran to tell Ambrose and Mathias all was safe; applauded his own sagacity; and thanked me a thousand times for having devoted myself so entirely to his service.

Seb. But by what means did you contrive to send the note to me of this appointment?

Flora. I sent it by old Cecily, and by a stratagem equal to any of my other: but this is no time for explanation; my mistress is waiting for me in my chamber, dressing herself in the new suit of cloaths you sent me of the Marquis's, which was a lucky thought, as it will certainly much less incommode her flight than a female dress;--and I must go tell her at what signal to steal out of the window to the Marquis, for I forgot it in my hurry.

(Nicholas appears upon the wall.)

Nic. Who in the name of wonder have we here? softly, softly; (he descends and conceals himself behind the hedge).

Flora. Now, Sebastian, while my lady is dressing, away to your master, and tell him we shall expect him here within a quarter of an hour;--and that he must come close by the other side of the garden wall; and as soon as he is there, he must clap with his hands so; (claps with her hands) I shall be waiting for the signal; and the first favourable moment after, I will begin playing on my guitar the favourite air, "Machère Amie," and he must take that signal for the exact time to leap into the garden.

Nic.

Nic. (Behind the hedge.) Good.

Flora. Good, did you say? I say excellent.

Seb. I did not speak.

Flora: But be sure to caution your master, that he does not come into the garden before he hears that very song I have mentioned,—and then to come directly—but bid him take great care not to mistake one air for another; for at that very air, my young lady will steal out of the pavilion to meet him.

Seb. I will remember all with the utmost exactness.

[He goes, and Nicholas runs on the other side the hedge to avoid him.]

Flora. [Calling after Sebastian.] In a quarter of an hour the Marquis must be here, remember—neither sooner nor later.

Seb. I remember.

Flora. Oh, Sebastian, I forgot—what have you done with Nicholas?

Seb. Oh, you make me die with laughing—he is a prisoner, poor devil.

Flora. But did they thrash him well, when they took him out of the box?

Seb. Oh, yes—they gave him a pretty drubbing, I assure you.

Flora. I am vastly glad to hear it—I thank them a thousand times --I wish I had been there. It was what he richly deserved. But away, Sebastian.---- Mind all I have said, and our fortune is made. *[She exit to the pavilion by the window, but so hid by Sebastian's following her close, that Nicholas thinks she goes in by the door.]*

Seb. [Climbing the wall.] I am not very fond of scaling this wall-- If I should break my neck, our project is at an end; and that would be shipwreck in the sight of port.

[Exit over the wall.]

Nic. [Coming forward.] And now, my dear gentleman and lady, you shall pay for all your stratagems.

---And

---And my poor old master ! how glad will he be to see me returned ! [*Goes to the General's pavilion.*] He is not in bed, I see.---General, General.

[*Raps at the door.*]

Enter Ambrose, in his night-cap.

Nic. Ambrose, a'nt you glad to see me here ?

[*Putting out his hand.*]

Amb. Get about your business---how dare you show your face here ?

Nic. More ill usage still---sure, never innocence was so ill treated. Mr. Ambrose, [*In the most begging tone.*] I pray, I supplicate of you, to inform the General I have a secret of the utmost importance to communicate to him.

Amb. I'll let him know---but you may dread your reception. [*Exit.*]

Nic. Oh, the blessing of being faithful !--- I have this day been beaten by all parties---friends and enemies all have kicked me ; and the bitterest foes agree in using me like a dog.

Enter General in his robe de chambre, Ambrose with him.

Gen. How dare you, Sir, enter my doors ?---do you think I am to be imposed upon by any hypocritical story, invented merely to replace yourself in my family ?

Nic. Dear Sir, I humbly on my knees beg your pardon, for the mistake you are in.

Gen. Impertinent.---

Nic. Call me what you will, so you won't speak loud. [*Retiring from Flora's pavilion.*] Beat me, if you have the heart ; but when your passion is over, permit me to do you a signal piece of service.

Gen.

Gen. What service?

Nic. Within a quarter of an hour your niece will be carried out of your house---I overheard the whole plot; and Flora is at the head of it.

Gen. Do you dare to accuse that faithful creature?

Nic. Faithful creature! why, Sir, it was she that had me carried to the Marquis's hotel in a box.

Gen. What do you mean?---in a box?

Nic. Yes, Sir, in a box---she procured the Marquis's escape, and made me take his place---I cried---but she laughed;---and made Mathias take me away; for he cou'd not hear my complaints;---and when he got me on his shoulder, he did so shake and jumble me; I was impatient to be let out---but that was ten times worse; --for he gave me to the care of four footmen, belonging to the Marquis; and as soon as they opened the chest, and saw it was me,---souse I went into a tub of cold water; and then to dry me, they tossed me in a blanket.---The Marquis took me out of their hands; but he shut me up in a dark room,--from whence I escaped through a hole in the wall, and got into the garden;---the gardener took me for a thief, and sent a shower of potatoes and cucumbers at my head--I saved myself, by climbing over the wall, and tumbled into a ditch on the other side.

Gen. Very well. Go on. What then?

Nic. Is not that enough? if it is not, I have more to come yet.

Gen. So much the better---I like to hear it extremely.

Nic. After all my distress, I thought myself happy when I reached your door---but I found it shut against me;---and had not a ladder been placed by the Marquis's people against that wall---

Gen. A ladder?

Nic. Or how cou'd I have been here? I ascended it softly---descended it softly--and overheard Flora plotting

plotting with the Marquis's valet---he that personated Don Carlos.

Gen. It can't be---I locked Flora in the pavilion.

Nic. These eyes saw her---and this was the plan she laid with the Marquis's servant---within a quarter of an hour the Marquis is to walk on the other side that wall, and to give the signal he is there, by clapping his hands---[*Thus.*] Flora is to reply, by playing upon her guittar "*Ma chère amié.*" On hearing this air [no other] the Marquis leaps into the garden; your niece comes from the pavilion, runs to him, they scale the wall, bid farewell to you; and you run, with old Ambrose limping after them in vain.

Gen. This demands attention. Flora deceive me?---she must then have false keys, both of my niece's apartment and her own.

Nic. If you doubt what I have said, go to bed, and consider of it again in the morning.

Gen. No---I cannot but believe you---Ambrose.

Amb. Sir.

Gen. Fetch the blunderbuss.

Amb. Yes, Sir.

[*Exit, and returns with it.*]

Gen. Do you hide yourself behind these elms; and the moment the Marquis descends into the garden, seize him, and lead him home to his hotel.

Amb. We won't let him escape, you may depend upon it

Nic. No,---you may depend upon it.

Gen. But behave with proper respect---no violence---that is according to our agreement

Amb. Then for what did you send me for the blunderbuss?

Gen. To keep him in apprehension, and make him go away quietly.

Nic. He would go much more quietly, Sir, if you would permit Ambrose to shoot at him first.

Gen. I tell you, no---my honour is engaged---take
this

this key of the garden gate, and lead him out that way; and I'll place myself at the door of the pavilion, in order to seize my niece as she attempts to come out to him.

Flora. [*At a window.*] The moment approaches, and yet she is not quite dressed.

Gen. [*To Nicholas and Ambrose.*] Hush—and hide yourselves instantly—do not stir or breathe.

[*They hide behind the elms.*]

Flora. I hear somebody. Who's there?

Gen. *Flora*, come hither; I have a word or two to say to you.

Flora. The General! Unfortunate. [*Aside.*] Open the door, Sir, and I'll come immediately.

Gen. (*Unlocks the door.*) And I warrant, when you are come, I'll make you give the signal in spite of yourself—I wou'd not but have the pleasure of seizing the Marquis in this garden, and sending him home again—for it is not merely the satisfaction of overturning his projects; but the pleasure of turning them into ridicule, that I aim at;—and therefore, my young gentleman, you shall make your appearance, I am resolved.

Enter Flora, with a guittar in her hand.

Flora. What did you please to want with me, Sir?

Gen. And [*Drawing two garden chairs, and placing them at the door of the pavilion*] Sit down, *Flora*, and I'll sit down too [*Sits*] let us have a little conversation together.

Flora. Dear Sir, if you have not any thing very particular to say, will you permit me to go to bed? for I die with sleep. [*Yawning.*]

Gen. Why, you offered of your own accord to sit up till midnight?

Flora.

Flora. Very true---but the air is so sharp. Bless me, I die with cold. *(Shaking.)*

Gen. And yet you walked in the garden after bidding me good night?

Flora. He saw me---all is lost. *[Aside.]* Dear! what a thought!

Gen. I saw you---and you talked with some body too.

Flora. He overheard us. *[Aside.]* Dear Sir, how was that possible, when you had me under lock and key?

Gen. You know you have false keys---I saw you lock and unlock the door.

Flora. He knows nothing, I find. *[Aside.]*

Gen. Give me those keys.

Flora. Indeed, Sir, indeed, I have not any.

Gen. Well, perhaps I am deceived.

Flora. Certainly you are.

Gen. Come, play me a tune on your guittar.

Flora. It is out of tune, Sir *[Alarmed.]*

Gen. Pshaw! pshaw! I command you to do it;---one little air, and I'll go to bed.

Flora. What air, pray Sir?

Gen. The first you think of

Flora. Upon my word the thing is so out of tune---

[She plays a short tune reluctantly; just as it is finished, the Marquis on the other side of the wall, gives the signal by clapping his hands.]

Gen. Vastly well; and there is somebody in the streets applauding you.

Flora. *[Aside.]* 'Tis the signal.

Gen. This air was so finely executed you must play me another; "Ma chère Amié," for instance.

Flora. *(Starting.)* No, pray Sir, excuse me; indeed I can't: I am afraid he knows all: *[Aside.]*

Gen.

Gen. What, refuse to play when you have met with such applause? play, play, "*Ma chère Amié.*"

Flora. Oh, Sir, you have, I fear, discovered all; you know the whole scheme, I am sure you do, and on my knees— [kneeling.]

Gen. No forgiveness;—don't hope for it;—there kneel, and play the air I mentioned;—Stir not for your life, nor utter a word. Obey.

[*Flora, with the most melancholy countenance and half crying, sings and plays, Ma chère Amié.* During the air the Marquis appears upon the wall, and Julia steps one leg out of the window from which Flora has passed and repassed, dressed in a habit like the Marquis:

Nich. (Seeing the Marquis on the wall) There he is.

Amb. Let me go first: Consider, I am lame.

(They each strive to go first, Nicholas succeeds, and creeps softly along the hedge—at the end of the air the Marquis jumps into the garden, and falls upon his hands behind the hedge.

Marq. S'death, I am watched.

[Julia at the same time comes out of the window, and places herself by the wall. Nicholas immediately secures her, and brings her down the stage—she, overcome with grief, covers her face with her cloak.

Nich. Here he is, Sir; we have taken him. Now, Marquis, what would you say if I was to shut you up in a dark room?

Amb. (presenting his gun.) No resistance, or you are a dead man.

Flora. It is Nicholas has discovered all. (Aside.

Throws herself on one of the garden chairs.

E

Marq.

Marq. (Behind the hedge.) What do I hear?

Gen. (to Julia) Your humble servant, my good Lord.—Why do you hide your face? do you think we don't know you? go, go, my lads, conduct his Lordship safe to his hotel, and stand sentinel at his door till the clock strike twelve—and then return back in triumph;—make haste home with him before the clock strike—away, away.

(Exit Julia, led by Nicholas and Ambrose.)

Gen. And so end my cares.—*(with great joy)* Poor fellow? suffered himself to be taken away too without speaking a word;—caught in his own snare;—sure a man never looks so ridiculous as when he is caught in his own snare.—*(to Flora.)* And you, you perfidious—what have you to say? you who received my purse?

Flora. But I told you I did not deserve it.

Gen. Oh, yes; I don't know whether you did not deserve it;—for you have taken a great deal of trouble to day, and to very little purpose—ha! ha! ha!—I believe the Marquis will have enough to do to pay his wager, without paying you any thing, and so you see I have done it for him—and now I'll step and with my niece joy of the success of her project.

(Exit to the pavillion.)

Flora. Oh! how I grudge your joy; but while he goes up the stairs, I'll see if my lady cannot come out of the window. *(She goes to the window of the Pavillion.)* Madam, madam, Julia.

Marq. (From the hedge.) Flora, Flora.

Flora. Is it you, Madam?

Marq. (coming forward.) No—'tis I.

Flora. You? why, who have they taken away then?

Marq. Your mistress.

Flora. (Expressing the most extreme joy.) My mistress!—She!—Madam Julia!—Oh, do not tell me
so

to---I can't bear it---I shall die with joy---(*Running to the door of the pavillion*) Sir---Sir---General---General---Sir.

Marq. Peace--be quiet--let me escape first.

Flora. That's right--away, away, before the clock strikes [*Exit Marquis*] Thank heaven he has only across the street to go.---The General laughed at me;--now, how I long to laugh at him. Sir, come down instantly, and take your share of the joke.

Enter General.

Gen. My niece is not in bed-- where, where can she be?

Flora. She has not even been in bed.

Gen. Where is she then?

Flora. Gone to the Marquis.

Gen. My niece?-----

Flora. Gone to his hotel,-- conducted by your own servants, and by your own command.

Enter Nicholas, running

Nic. We have led him home--the clock has struck twelve--and now we return in triumph, as you ordered. [*Seeing the Marquis and Julia without.*] Oh, heaven, do I see double, or have I lost my sight?

Flora. No, but you have lost your wits.

Gen. It was not my niece they took, surely?

Enter the Marquis, Julia, Ambrose, Sebastian, and several domesticks of the Marquis's with lights.

Julia. Pardon me, my dear uncle, but it was your niece.

Flora. Pray, Sir, return Nicholas thanks for all this--for 'tis he that has brought it about.

Nic.

Nic. How came I not to find out the disguise? That other people should not be deceived I am not surprized at; but that I should be imposed upon, is astonishing!

Flora. Henceforth learn, Mr. Nicholas, that when you meanly become a listener, you ought to hear every syllable that is said; otherwise you are exposed to blunders.

Marg. [To the General.] Uncle, will you permit me to call you by that name?

Gen. "A man never looks so ridiculous, as when he is caught in his own snare."---Yes, my Lord, stand upon no ceremony.

Flora. [To Sebastian.] Husband, will you permit me to call you by that name?

Seb. No, Flora---you have been very kind in promoting my master's happiness---but in doing it, you have discovered such cunning and contrivance, that for a wife, I prefer old Cecily, who has not even art enough to conceal her ill nature.

Flora. And you won't have me?---[To the Marquis.] Pray, my Lord, lay a bet he marries me, before twelve o'clock to-morrow night---your Lordship is so lucky, I am sure you will win.

Enter Mathias.

Mat. (To the General.) Don't be uneasy---I have had a little nap---but the door is secure,---and you may rely upon my attention. I'll let no creature in but Don Carlos. [Exit.]

Gen. Get away, you deaf---And was old Cecily faithful?

Julia. She was, uncle---and you must recompense her for the injustice you have done her merely for her fidelity.

Gen. I will.

Nic.

Nic. And pray, who will recompense me for all the injuries I have suffered for my fidelity?

Marq. I will repay every servant, who either by their genius have aided, or by their fidelity obstructed my designs; for possessed of such a blessing as my Julia, I shall ever remember with gratitude the adventures of this day, and never cease to reflect with rapture on the MIDNIGHT HOUR.

T H E E N D .

PROLOGUE,

By H. S. WOODFALL, Junior.

Spoken by Mr. POPE.

SENT by the fair your mercy to implore
Who sins again, tho' pardon'd oft before,
What arts of rhet'rick can your pity move,
Disarm your anger and excite your love!
All, all are vain; nor can I well defend her,
Who is, at writing plays, an old offender.

Yet not this night she bids your tears to flow
For Hafwell's* goodness, or for Euston's* woe,
Yet not this night your patience she assails
With Widow's Vows*, and Shawls*, and Eastern
Tales*:

A Frenchman's fancy gave the bantling birth,
Which now, in Paris, source of constant mirth,
Reigns the dramatic idol of the day,
And from its rival pieces bears the palm away.

Once had she sought by Gallic scenes to please,
Whate'er their spirit, elegance or ease:
To France John Bull each harsh term had applied,
And spirit, elegance, or ease denied.

"You bring your farce† from France!—it shall not
pass;

"A Frenchman's drama—is indeed a farce."

Thus had he spoke, while pride his bosom steels,
Nor granted Frenchmen wit—but in their heels.

But now no more to *Prejudice* he bends,
(Since Peace her influence o'er the land extends;)
No more with mists she seeks his sight to blind,
And cloud the native candour of his mind.

For soon as Peace her gentle reign begun
She fled, as phantoms fly before the sun,
In other climes her baneful pow'r to try,
To point the insult, and to wing the lie.

* Alluding to former Pieces written by the Author.

† On the first night of representation it was performed as a farce.

Peace,

P R O L O G U E.

Peace, when again her radiant smile she wore,
And bade our banners stream with blood no more,
Aloft in air her wand of Olive held,
And the mists rais'd by Prejudice dispell'd.

Oh Prejudice ! to Falshood near allied,
Thou stubborn child of ignorance and pride,
Proud without worth, and senseless tho' severe,
To genius hostile, as to folly dear !
Thy slave no more, the Briton can submit
To Truth's decree, and grant a *Frenchman* wit ;
To give just praise his lib'ral soul aspires,
His merit owns, and owning it, admires ;
Of *Fig'ro's* tale enjoys each hum'rous stroke,
Trick following trick, and joke succeeding joke ;
And hears brave *Richard's* story with delight,
Tho' chaste, not dull ; not frivolous, tho' light.

And should *our* scenes no ill-spent time employ,
But gild the coming hour with harmless joy,
Forgive the fair one who this night essays
To dress a French muse *a la mode Anglaise*.
Forgive her daring, if, when praise inspires
Her glowing hopes, and fans her mental fires,
Too oft the task of Author she assume,
And bid, with rapid haste, the flow'rs of fancy bloom.

But shou'd her *Midnight Hour* no laurels gain,
Her hopes prove fruitless, and her wishes vain ;
And shou'd it boast nor humour, sense, nor ease,
No wit to dazzle, and no plot to please ;
Think, think her version but to please was plann'd,
And scatter censure with no lavish hand ;
But bear in mind the moral poet's line,
“ To err, is human ; to forgive divine.”

[Several lines in this Prologue are omitted in delivery from the Stage, on account of the length of the composition.]

